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# Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 3136

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, BR
SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO POSTPONEMENT OF SECRETARY'S VISIT

REF: STATE 092197

SUMMARY, ALTHOUGH REFLECTING SOME SARCASM VERGING ON BITTERNESS AS WELL AS DISAPPOINTMENT, PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN LARGELY UNDERSTANDING OF NECESSITY OF POSTPONING VISIT. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN PRIVATE COMMENT TO US HAVE DECLARED COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING, A POSITION FOREIGN MINISTER HAS ALSO TAKEN PUBLICLY. END SUMMARY

1. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS PROMINENT AND STRAIGHTFORWARD, ESSENTIALLY LIMITING ITSELF TO FACTS AS ANNOUNCED. PROMINENT JORNAL DO BRASIL, HOWEVER, OBSERVED SHARPLY THAT "SINCE KISSINGER BECAME SECRETARY OF STATE, ALL OF HIS ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT A LATIN AMERICAN TOUR WERE FOLLOWED BY CANCELLATIONS. SO FAR, HE HAS VISITED ONLY MEXICO". THE LEAD EDITORIAL APRIL 22 IN O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO (WHICH RECENTLY BECAME QUITE NEGATIVE AND EVEN SNIDE ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT) DECLARED "ALL WAS INDICATING THAT HE WOULD HAVE VERY LITTLE TO DISCUSS IN BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, AND VENEZUELA". INNER-PAGE STORY IN SAME EDITION, HOWEVER, QUOTED BRAZILIAN DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS TO THE EFFECT THAT EVEN WITHOUT THIEU'S RESIGNATION, SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY POSTPONEMENT.

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2. REACTION IN PRESS (APRIL 23) HIGHLIGHTED SECRETARY'S TELE-

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PHONE CALL TO FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA, AND SILVEIRA'S REMARKS
THAT BRAZIL UNDERSTANDS THE POSTPONEMENT AND "IT IS NOT A TRADI-
TION OF BRAZIL TO SHOW LACK OF COMPREHENSION IN THE FACE OF
DIFFICULTIES OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES". COVERAGE INCLUDED POINT
THAT POSTPONEMENT WAS NOT UNEXPECTED (INDEED, IT APPEARS TO HAVE
BECOME A POINT OF PRIDE FOR PEOPLE TO DECLARE THAT THEY WERE SURE
BEFOREHAND SECRETARY WOULD BE UNABLE TO COME), AND SOME REPORTS
SUGGEST FEELING THAT RRIP WILL IN FACT NEVER COME OFF. VARIOUS
PAPERS HAD IDENTICAL LINE, POSSIBLY BASED ON FOREIGN MINISTRY
SOURCES, THAT POSTPONEMENT LEFT "UNPLEASANT FEELING THAT LATIN
AMERICAN PROBLEMS STILL HAVE INSIGNIFICANT PRIORITY IN THE SCALE
OF VALUES OBSERVED IN WASHINGTON". STILL ANOTHER COMMON THEME,
OF THE SOUR-GRAPES VARIETY, WAS STATED MOST BLUNTLY IN A FORNAL
DO BRASIL EDITORIAL APRIL 23: "(THE VISIT) WAS SO FAST-PACED--
FOLLOWING KISSINGER'S 'AIR-SHUTTLE' DIPLOMATIC STYLE--THAT IT
SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN A COURTESY CALL MORE THAN FOR SERIOUS PUR-
POSES OF A 'NEW DIALOGUE'". EDITORIAL GOES ON TO CALL FOR
REINFORCEMENT OF FOUNDATIONS OF NEW DIALOGUE THROUGH FREQUENT
DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS BY WASHINGTON VISITORS AT SLIGHTLY LOWER
LEVEL (ASST. SECY. ROGERS AND LUIGI EINAUDI ARE NAMED). IN
INNER-PAGE STORY IN SAME ISSUE, FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES WERE
QUOTED AS NOTING THAT PERU AND CHILE WERE EVEN WORSE HIT,
AND THAT IN VIEW OF "FRAGILITY" OF TRIP'S PLANS, IT WOULD HAVE
BEEN SMARTER TO PUT OFF THE OFFENSE OF EXCLUDING THEM UNTIL
THE LAST MINUTE; IN THAT CASE, POSTPONING THE WHOLE TRIP
WOULD HAVE AVOIDED THE OFFENSE ENTIRELY.

3. FOR ADDITIONAL COVERAGE OF PRESS TREATMENT, SEE BRASILIA 3063
AND 3105.

4. WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, AT LEAST,
APPEAR TO HAVE TAKEN THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT
IN GOOD PART, LED BY FONMIN SILVEIRA, WHO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR
APRIL 21 THAT HE FULLY UNDERSTOOK THE NECESSITY TO PUT THE VISIT
OFF. IN CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 23, THE FONMIN
REPEATED THAT, "IF ANYONE UNDERSTANDS THE NECESSITY OF THE POST-
PONEMENT, IT IS US". HE SAID THAT THE SECRETARY WILL BE WELCOME
IN BRAZIL AT ANY TIME HE IS ABLE TO COME. IN CONVERSATION WITH
DCM APRIL 22, THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S CHIEF OF CABINET, SOUTO
MAIOR, COMMENTED TO THE EFFECT THAT THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE
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SECRETARY'S VISIT WAS THE KIND OF THING THAT SOMETIMES HAPPENS
IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND THAT EXPERIENCED DIPLOMATS ACCEPT.
"WE RECOGNIZE," HE CONTINUED, "THAT THE SECRETARY HAS HEAVY
RESPONSIBILITIES ELSEWHERE." WE BELIEVE, INDEED, THAT WE DETECT
AMONG THE WORKING LEVEL SUBSTANTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
WHO WERE ENGAGED IN PREPARATION FOR THE VISIT--AND WHO WERE
OVERWHELMED BY ALMOST SIMULTANEOUS PREPARATIONS FOR THE VISITS
OF TWO OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS AND ADDITIONAL CEREMONIAL OCCA-

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SIONS--A TINGE OF RELIEF THAT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT WAS POSTPONED.

5. REACTION AMONG MILITARY CIRCLES HERE HAS BEEN EQUALLY WITHOUT BITTERNESS. ALTHOUGH THERE IS A GENERAL REACTION OF AN "I TOLD YOU SO" NATURE, REFERRING TO INITIAL SKEPTICISM THAT THE VISIT WOULD COME OFF, THERE IS GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF, AND SYMPATHY WITH, THE NECESSITY OF THE POSTPONEMENT IN THE FACE OF SERIOUS DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE FOREIGN MINISTER IS WHOLLY SINCERE IN SAYING THAT THE POSTPONEMENT DOES NOT AFFECT OUR RELATIONS, AND THAT HE LOOKS FORWARD TO A RESCHEDULING OF THE VISIT.
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